

APPENDIX IV

TAB D

Dover Area School District News

February 1985

Biology Curriculum Update

This newsletter has been produced to help explain the changes in the biology curriculum. Unfortunately a great deal of misinformation has been spread regarding this policy. We hope this publication will help those who have been misled understand the substance of the policy, with additional information and clarification. Some may have about the curriculum change. We encourage you to understand this matter.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is all the fuss about?

A small minority of parents have objected to the recent curriculum change by arguing that the Board has acted to impose its own religious beliefs on students. This is not true. The approved statement read to students was adopted to present a balanced science curriculum and forbid any presentation of religious belief.

Students are told of the theory of Intelligent Design (ID). Isn't ID clearly religious in nature?

No. The theory of intelligent design involves science vs. science, where scientists looking at the same data come to different conclusions. The theory does not mention or discuss God, Christianity or the Bible in any way.

What is the theory of evolution?

The word evolution has several meanings, and those supporting Darwin's theory of evolution use that definition in definition to their advantage. Evolution can mean something as simple as change over time, which is not controversial, and is supported by most people.

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Sen. Santorum Applauds Dover District

By Sen. Rick Santorum

The following editorial appeared in the 12/25/04 edition of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

A recent (Pittsburgh) Post-Gazette editorial was completely inaccurate in describing the York County district's decision regarding the teaching of evolution and intelligent design. Instead of engaging in a reasoned debate on the issues, the fact is that the Dover Area School District will

scientific theory that is open to scrutiny, not as sacred dogma that cannot be questioned.

But is there a real scientific dispute? Absolutely. Recently, over 300 scientists, including scholars from Yale, Princeton, MIT and the Smithsonian, signed a public statement declaring that they were "stunned" of claims for the ability of random mutation and natural selection to account for the complexity of life and encouraging "careful examination of the evidence for Darwinian theory."

"The school board simply has presented a balanced curriculum that makes students aware of the controversies surrounding evolution."

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Let me be clear. I firmly believe that evolution should not be taught in public schools. Proponents of intelligent design theory believe that our children should learn about evolution, including a candid assessment of the theory's unresolved difficulties. Evolution should be taught as a

Between these is a real scientific dispute, federal education policy calls on schools to "teach the controversy."

In 2001, I offered report language ultimately attached to the No Child Left Behind Act that states, "Where topics are taught that may generate controversy (such as biological evolution), the curriculum should help students to understand the full range of scientific views that exist, why such topics may generate controversy and how scientific discovery can profoundly affect society."

Constitutional law also allows the teaching of

alternative scientific theories in the classroom. In 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court made clear in *Edwards v. Aguillard* that "we do not imply that a legislature could never require that scientific criticism of prevailing scientific theories be taught."

A 2001 Zogby poll shows that 73 percent of Americans believe that "biology teachers should teach Darwin's theory of evolution, but also the scientific evidence against it." Even more overwhelming is a 2004 Statberg Poll showing 73 percent of California voters believe that biology teachers in public schools should teach the scientific evidence for and against Darwin's theory of evolution.

Ultimately, academic freedom is at stake. Students should learn both the strengths of Darwinian evolution, as well as the theory's scientific weaknesses. It is beneficial for our students to discuss the existing unanswered questions surrounding evolution. If we want our students to become educated citizens, we should all support an open, engaging and broad discussion of evolution theory in our public schools. I commend the Dover Area School District for taking a stand and refusing to ignore the controversy.

Text of Statement Read to Students

"The Pennsylvania Academic Standards require students to learn about Darwin's Theory of Evolution and eventually to take a standardized test of which evolution is a part."

Because Darwin's Theory is a theory, it continues to be tested as new evidence is discovered. The Theory is not a fact. Opponents of the Theory exist for which there is no evidence. A theory is defined as a well-tested

hypothesis that explains a broad range of observations.

Intelligent Design is an explanation of the origin of life that differs from Darwin's view. The reference book, Of Pandas and People, is available for students who might be interested in gaining an understanding of what Intelligent Design actually involves.

With respect to any theory, students are encouraged to keep an open mind. The school teaches the distinction of the Origin of Life to individual students and their families. As a Standards-driven district, clear instruction focuses upon preparing students to achieve proficiency on Standards-based assessments."

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Frequently Asked Questions Continued

However, evolution is (in biological terms) a process whereby life forms from non-living matter and subsequently developed by natural means, namely, natural selection, acting on random variations.

What is the theory of Intelligent Design?

The theory of intelligent design (ID) is a scientific theory that differs from Darwin's view, and is endorsed by a growing number of credible scientists. ID attempts to explain the complexity of the world by interpreting the scientific data now available in modern biology. Its principle argument is that certain features of the universe are best explained by an intelligent cause, rather than undirected causes such as Darwin's theory of natural selection.

In simple terms, on a molecular level, scientists have discovered a purposeful arrangement of parts, which cannot be explained by Darwin's theory. In fact, since the 1930's, advances in molecular biology and chemistry have shown us that living cells, the fundamental units of life processes, cannot be explained by chance.

Even Bill Gates, computer software guru and founder of Microsoft, has said, "DNA is like a computer program but far, far, more advanced than any software we

have ever created."

Are Dover students taught the theory of intelligent design?

No. Perhaps the most widely misreported fact is that Dover school districts requiring the "teaching" of intelligent design.

Students are only made aware of the theory of ID during the one minute statement read prior to the sixth grade biology course (see front page). Students interested in learning more are able to do so by viewing books and materials available in the library.

Are there religious implications in the theory of ID?

Not any more to than the religious implications of Darwinism. Some have said that before Darwin, "we thought a benevolent God had created us. Biology took away our status as made in the image of God"... or "Ides in the result of a purposeful process that did not have to be in mind. He was not pleased"... or "Darwinism made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist."

Is the DASD policy unconstitutional?

The last Supreme Court case dealing with the theory of evolution was the 1987 case of *Edwards v. Aguillard*.

Although that case held unconstitutional the teaching of evolution alongside Darwin's theory of evolution, it specifically held that schools can teach alternatives to Darwin's approach to origins. The court stated that teaching a variety of scientific theories regarding the origins of life might be validly done with the clear secular intent of enhancing the effectiveness of science education which is the goal of the Dover Area School District.

What about the lawsuit filed by the ACLU?

In December the district was served with a federal lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of several parents of Dover students.

The Thomas More Law Center, a non-profit law firm based in Ann Arbor, MI has agreed to defend the district without charge.

Knowing there were exceptional legal questions involved in the curriculum change, the statement was adopted to comply with the requirements of the law, while also providing students with the best possible science education. As the elected representatives of the citizens of Dover, the board was determined to act in the best interest of students, despite threats from the ACLU. The lawsuit is being fought vigorously.

Administration: No Problems With Curriculum Implementation

On January 18 & 19, the curriculum changes adopted by the Dover Area School Board on October 18 were implemented. Ninth grade students enrolled in biology were read a four paragraph, one sentence statement approved by the Board. A copy of the statement read to students appears on the front of this publication.

Contrary to rumors and misleading news reports, after the statement was read, students were instructed on the theory of evolution as

difficultly than in years past. No teacher was instructed to teach the theory of intelligent design or present his or her religious beliefs.

As previously explained, the purpose of the curriculum change was to provide students with a fair and balanced science curriculum. On that basis, the school board voted to make students aware of the scientific controversy surrounding the theory of evolution in a manner which they believed to be objective and neutral.

Parents of students with concerns about the curriculum statement were permitted to discuss their children from that portion of the class. Of the 173 students who are enrolled in the course, parents of 15 students requested their students be opted out of hearing the statement.

We are pleased that the curriculum change occurred without incident, and appreciate the cooperation and tremendous support of both parents and students.

Quotables

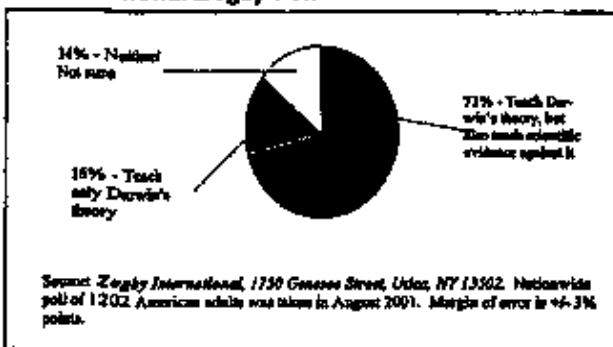
"The Dover Area School District has taken a step in the right direction by attempting to teach the controversy of evolution."
— Sen. Rick Santorum

"[DNA] has shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce life, that [intelligence] must have been involved... [its] whole life has been guided by the principle of Planck's Science: Follow the evidence, wherever it leads."

—Anthony Flew (famous former atheist who now admits the universe appears to have an intelligent designer)

"Many topics are taught that may generate controversy (such as biological evolution); the curriculum should help students to understand the full range of scientific views that exist." (Conference Report from the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001)

2001 National Zogby Poll



For more information on this topic, please visit our District web site or our website at www.dover.k12.pa.us